

Michigan Citizen Action

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The Honorable John D. Dingell, U. S. Representative
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
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July 24, 2001

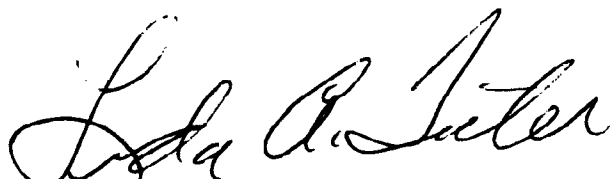
Dear Representative Dingell:

On behalf of Michigan Citizen Action – the state's largest membership-based consumer-watchdog group, and an affiliate of the nationwide progressive organization USAction – I am writing in support of H.R. 2563, the "Bipartisan Patient Protection Act" offered by you and Reps. Greg Ganske (R/IA-04), Charlie Norwood (R/GA-10), and Marion Berry (D/AR-01).

Like its Senate counterpart S. 1052 (McCain-Edwards), H.R. 2563 offers vital protection to millions of patients whose health care is now subject to the bottom-line profit concerns of health-maintenance organizations. With the addition of language from an amendment to S. 1052, Ganske-Dingell-Norwood-Berry covers all 13 key patient protections mentioned in the Kaiser Family Fund study of state laws on patients' rights, *Hit or Miss*. It also goes beyond the study in several areas; for example, it would specifically cover breast-cancer treatment (and notification of rights), and protect health-care providers who advocate for patients or report quality-of-care problems from retaliation.

H.R. 2563 would be a true *patients'* bill of rights – focusing on protecting citizens, rather than insuring HMO profits as the Republican leadership alternatives (S. 889 and H.R. 2315) would do. I am glad to see that many of the best parts of H.R. 526 and S. 1052 have been combined into a bill that is strong . . . and well-positioned to pass. If a stronger bill is possible, I would welcome it – but, as it stands now, H.R. 2563 would represent real progress . . . a step forward for the people of Michigan and the nation. And I pledge the support of Michigan Citizen Action, and its tens of thousands of members across the state, toward helping the nation take that step forward.

I thank you for your time and attention to this letter. I hope it will help you persuade your fellow committee members, and the rest of Congress, to take action for the good of Michigan citizens – and pass H.R. 2563, or an equally strong national patients' bill of rights.



Linda Teeter
Executive Director, Michigan Citizen Action

cc: Michigan House delegation